SPORT

Ouedraogo stunner sends Leipzig second

LEIPZIG: Teenager Assan Ouedraogo unleashed an unstoppable shot as RB Leipzig eased past visitors Werder Bremen 2-0 on Sunday to move back into second place in the Bundesliga.

The 19-year-old completed a memorable week after also scoring on his Germany debut in Monday's 6-0 victory over Slovakia to secure their spot in the World Cup and make him the youngest Germany player to score in a first international match.

The hosts were in control in the first half but their efforts either missed the target or were blocked by Werder keeper Mio Backhaus. He was helpless, however, when Ouedraogo whipped a powerful left-footed shot into the top far corner in the 63rd minute for his third league goal of the season.

Substitute Xaver Schlager then turned in the box to drill in Leipzig's second goal in the 80th, sealing their victory and earning their fourth win in the last five league games.

Leipzig, who bounced back from their loss to Hoffenheim on the previous matchday, moved up to 25 points in second place, with champions Bayern Munich in top spot on 31.

In Sunday's late game, Rani Khedira scored the only goal as Union Berlin won at St Pauli, condemning the hosts to their eighth league defeat in a row.

The victory took Union up three spots to eighth. —Agencies

Two matches decided

LAHORE: Two matches were decided on the opening day of the Battle Axe Polo Cup at the Cavalry Polo Ground on Monday.

Diamond Paints/Din Polo edged Indus Polo 9-7 in a close contest. Raja Jalal Arsalan scored five goals, while Mir Huzaifa Ahmed added four.

For Indus Polo, Bilal Haye struck three goals, Ibrahim Khalial and Mohammad Ali Malik scored two each, and Pir Danish added one.

In the second match, Team Balochistan recorded a 9–5½ win over Sula Polo. Raja Mekayial Sami led the way with six goals, while Ahmed Bilal Riaz, Col Shayan Manzoor Abbasi and Umar Ashfaq scored one apiece.

Sula Polo — who began with a half-goal handicap — replied through Suleman Baber Aziz (two), and Saim Abbas, sub Shahzad and Hamza Ijaz, who scored one each.—Sports Reporter

MILAN: AC Milan's Christian Pulisic (R) vies for the ball with Alessandro Bastoni of Inter Milan during their Serie A match at San Siro.—Reuters

Pulisic fires Milan to derby glory as Roma move top

MILAN: Christian Pulisic fired AC Milan to derby victory with the only goal in Sunday's 1-0 win over Inter Milan with Mike Maignan saving Hakan Calhanoglu's penalty to deny the hosts an equaliser, moving their side up to second in Serie A and within two points of new leaders AS Roma.

Inter's three-match winning run had brought them to the top of the standings, but there is little room for error in this season's Scudetto battle, where Roma hold pole position after a 3-1 win at Cremonese and Milan are now on their shoulders. Milan have 25 points, level with defending champions Napoli, while Inter, who could have returned to the summit with a win, slipped to fourth place on 24 points alongside Bologna.

US forward Pulisic pounced for his fifth goal of the season in the 54th minute after Inter goalkeeper Yann Sommer weakly palmed away Alexis Saelemaekers' low shot, Milan's only true opportunity of a tense encounter at a boisterous San Siro.

Pulisic has been excellent this season, with two assists to go with his joint league-leading goal tally for Milan, who have a great record against the top teams but have dropped points to the lesser lights.

"Often you're more on it for a big match, and we need to understand that we're vulnerable when we let the intensity drop," said Milan coach Massimiliano Allegri.

"This victory is important on a psychological level, because we could have gone five points behind," Allegri added. "It was very important to stay within the top four."

But Milan also had Maignan to thank for the three points as the France goalkeeper kept out Calhanoglu's penalty in the 74th minute and tipped a Lautaro Martinez volley onto the post eight minutes before half-time.

Francesco Acerbi thumped a header onto the woodwork 10 minutes before as Inter dominated the play but couldn't find their way past Maignan.

Cristian Chivu's Inter now turn their attentions to Wednesday's Champions League clash at Atletico Madrid, where they can take another step towards direct qualification for the last 16 after winning all four of their previous matches.

"We're on the right track. We believe in the coach and the project, and we can't change our minds about that because of one defeat," said Marcus Thuram. "We've got things we need to improve, but we can't throw everything out the window."

Milan meanwhile have a whole week to bask in a second straight derby win, with the red and black half of the city not having tasted defeat to their local rivals since Inter sealed their 20th league title against them in April 2024.

Earlier, Matias Soule, Evan Ferguson and Wesley scored the goals which gave Roma victory at Cremonese and continued their strong start to life under Gian Piero Gasperini.

Roma had only scored 12 times in their previous 11 league fixtures but were clinical in front of goal at the Stadio Giovanni Zini and are in the discussion for a first league title since 2001.

"I said yesterday that it's only right to dream in these positions, even though in the end dreams rarely come true," said Gasperini. "We're trying to keep the dream going for a little while longer."

In an action-packed first half which included a Roma goal ruled out for offside and a Cremonese penalty overturned, the visitors took the lead through Soule in the 17th minute.

And what had been a tight match was then decided by two quick strikes from Brighton loanee Ferguson, who scored his first club goal in over a year, and Wesley.

Ferguson calmly stroked home in the 64th minute after the ball rattled around the Cremonese area, and moments later Brazilian full-back Wesley finished off a lightning counter-attack by dinking a brilliant finish over Emil Audero.

Francesco Folino netted a consolation goal in stoppage time for promoted Cremonese, who sit 12th after their fourth defeat of the season.—Agencies

Real salvage thrilling late draw at Elche, Atletico edge Getafe

BARCELONA: Jude Bellingham struck late on to secure Real Madrid a 2-2 draw at Elche on Sunday, keeping his team top of La Liga by a point from rivals Barcelona.

Xabi Alonso's side, who have failed to win any of their last three matches across all competitions, struggled against their mid-table opponents in an entertaining battle in which Real twice came from behind to reclaim top spot on 32 points.

After a lacklustre first half, it was Elche who struck first in the 53rd minute from an impressive team move. German Varela's exquisite backheel assist found Aleix Febas inside the box, and the midfielder took one touch before delicately slotting the ball past goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois via the post.

Real levelled in the 81st minute through Dean Huijsen. The centre back reacted quickest to a loose ball following a corner, slotting home from close range to bring the visitors back into the contest. Elche, however, were undeterred and regained the lead three minutes later.

Alvaro Rodriguez controlled a well-timed pass on the edge of the box with his first touch before drilling a low, precise shot into the bottom left corner, leaving Courtois no chance.

Real fought valiantly to avoid defeat, and in the 87th minute Bellingham converted a crucial equaliser. Kylian Mbappe showed determination to keep a ball in play near the byline, delivering a clever cutback into the box that Bellingham calmly struck into the back of the net to secure a point for his team.

"Three matches without a win? That's football," coach Xabi Alonso told reporters. "We're not happy because we always want to win, but there are still many matches to play. The team hasn't fallen apart, the team is still competing. The results and the play can be improved because we're self-critical. It's in the face of adversity that we have to respond."

Barca cut Madrid's lead by two points over the weekend after they thrashed Athletic Bilbao 4-0 on Saturday in their first match back at Camp Nou.

Atletico Madrid, fourth, scraped a 1-0 win at Getafe earlier on Sunday courtesy of an 82nd-minute own goal by Domingos Duarte to keep the pressure on the teams above them.

The narrow victory on a chilly night at Getafe's Coliseum extended Atletico's winning streak in La Liga to five matches and lifted them to 28 points, three behind Barca.

Getafe, seventh, often prove a tough nut to crack at home and they frustrated their neighbours.

Atletico captain and all-time highest appearance maker Koke played his 700th game for the club, but it was not one of the more memorable.

Giacomo Raspadori turned a cross back across goal and Duarte bundled clumsily into his own net under pressure from Antoine Griezmann for the game's only goal.

Atletico are unbeaten in 12 consecutive league matches, after defeat by Espanyol on the opening day, and now turn their attention to the Champions League where they host Inter Milan on Wednesday.

"I'm very pleased and happy because we know it's very difficult to win here, it's a tough ground and a tough opponent, and it's very important to take home the three points. It's our second consecutive away win and that's great," Raspadori told broadcaster DAZN.—Agencies

Giroud brace earns Lille win over Paris FC

LILLE: Veteran forward Olivier Giroud netted twice as Lille won 4-2 at home to Paris FC in Ligue 1 on Sunday.

The 39-year-old struck in both halves after Willem Geubbels had given the visitors the lead.

Aissa Mandi headed a third and Lohann Doucet then gave Paris FC late hope, until Marius Broholm's spot-kick sealed Lille's place in the top four with 23 points.

The away side took the lead in the 11th minute when Geubbels gleefully tapped into an open net after Vincent Marchetti's piledriver fell kindly to the striker after blasting against the crossbar.

Giroud levelled for the hosts on 40 minutes as he swept home Romain Perraud's pass.

Lille dominated the second period but were unable to force a breakthrough until the final quarter-hour.

Substitute Hakon Haraldsson was caught from behind as he tried to get onto the end of a low cross into the box and Giroud made no mistake from the spot with 13 minutes remaining.

Mandi gave Lille breathing space as he nodded in a corner at the back post in the 80th minute.

Paris FC got a lifeline back into the match when Doucet tucked home from close range shortly afterwards.

But after some desperate rearguard action and Broholm's 96th-minute penalty, Genesio's side saw out a hard-fought victory.

Earlier, Olympique Lyonnais were held to a goalless stalemate at bottom-of-the-table Auxerre as the hosts put an end to a four-game losing streak in the league. Lyon move to 21 points but lost further ground on Paris Saint-Germain and Olympique de Marseille in the title race.

Auxerre remain three points from safety after fellow relegation candidates Lorient and Nantes played out a 1-1 draw.

Elsewhere, Metz, also on 11 points but with an inferior goal difference, replaced Lorient in the drop zone after they went down to a last-gasp 3-2 defeat at Brest.

Romain Del Castillo's penalty in the 10th minute of stoppage time condemned Stephane Le Mignan's charges to an eighth defeat of the campaign. Brest climbed to 14th place on 13 points.

Angers beat Toulouse 1-0 thanks to an early Yassin Belkhdim goal as they joined their opponents in mid-table on 16 points.—AFP

Four national players advance into CAS squash second round

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's squash players enjoyed a successful day as Hamza Khan, Mohammad Ammad, Anas Shah and Nasir Iqbal powered into the second round of the CAS-Serena Hotels International Squash Championship which started here at the Mushaf Squash Complex on Monday.

The day, however, was not without a setback for the home contingent, as seasoned campaigner Tayyab Aslam saw his campaign come to an end.

Hamza delivered a commanding performance, dispatching Egypt's Seif Shenawy in straight games. The Pakistani player dominated the match, sealing a 11-8, 11-5, 11-5 victory in just 27 minutes.

Ammad also made a strong start to his tournament, overcoming Hong Kong's Chi Him Wong with a convincing 11-3, 11-5, 11-9 win in 32 minutes.

Veteran Nasir secured his place in the next round after a hard-fought battle against Malaysia's Bryan Tze Kang Lim. Nasir eventually triumphed 11-9, 11-9, 10-12, 11-5 in a 43-minute encounter.

Anas, meanwhile, came from a game down to beat Egypt's Ziad Ibrahim 4-11, 11-7, 11-9, 11-5 after 38 minutes on court.

In the only disappointment for Pakistan on the opening day, Tayyab was outplayed by Adam Hawal as the Egyptian secured a 11-9, 11-8, 11-6 victory in 36 minutes.

Pakistan's top seeds Noor Zaman and Mohammad Asim Khan, received byes in the first round and will begin their campaigns in the second round on Tuesday.

In Monday's other matches, Malaysia's Mohammad Syafiq Kamal, Japan's Tomotaka Endo and Khaled Labib of Egypt also registered convincing wins to confirm their second round spots.—Sports Reporter

Shoaib ousted from ATP Challengers Cup first-round

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Mohammad Shoaib was knocked out in the first round of the ATP Challengers Cup which started here at the PTF Sports Complex on Monday.

The 23-year-old Shoaib — who was given a wild card entry in the tournament — lost to fifth-seeded Ukrainian Vadym Ursu 3-6, 7-6(11/9), 3-6.

In other Monday matches, the Czech Republic's Dominik Palan defeated Alp Horoz of Turkiye 6-3, 6-4. Russia's Timofei Derepasko beat another Turkish player, Koray Kirci 6-0, 6-3, to secure a last-16 berth.

Italy's Leonardo Borrelli also advanced, defeating Australia's Lawrence Bataljin 7-6(7/5), 6-1.

The championship will conclude on November 30.

Sweden's Elias Ymer, ranked 169 in the world, leads the seedings and enters as favourite.—Sports Reporter

Rohail hits double ton as spinners dominate QAT action

LAHORE: Day two of the final round of the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy featured a double-century from Islamabad's Rohail Nazir, a century by Fata's Salman Khan Jr and a string of five-wicket hauls from left-arm spinners across five venues.

At the Diamond Cricket Ground, Rohail completed his maiden first-class double-century before Islamabad were bowled out for 563 in 148.2 overs against Peshawar.

Resuming on 346-5, Islamabad added 217 runs as Rohail made 207, hitting 26 fours and six sixes. His 181-run stand with Arsal Sheikh (91) proved decisive. Peshawar reached 81-4 at stumps.

In Rawalpindi, Sialkot stayed afloat in their top-of-the-table clash against Karachi Blues, thanks to all-rounder Hamza Nazar, who picked up five wickets in the first innings and then struck an unbeaten 59 in the second.

Sialkot, who slipped to 145-7, recovered to 217-7 with Hamza and Afzaal Manzoor (23 not out) adding 72 runs. Earlier, Karachi Blues posted 225 to secure a 49-run first-innings lead, with Shan Masood anchoring the effort with 70.

At Abbottabad, the hosts were forced to follow on after being dismissed for 159 in response to Multan's 542-8 declared. Left-arm spinner Ali Usman continued his remarkable run, claiming 6-65 — his fifth consecutive, and sixth overall, five-for of the season.

Zeeshan Ashraf (94) and Aamer Yamin (75) lifted Multan earlier in the day. Abbottabad ended the day at 8-0 in their second innings.

Bahawalpur conceded a 124-run first-innings deficit after being bowled out for 188 against Faisalabad. Spinner Ahmed Safi Abdullah, playing his 50th first-class match, returned 5-36 and crossed 150 career wickets. Mohammad Ammar resisted with a 214-ball 66.

At Peshawar, Fata secured a 34-run lead over Lahore Whites, built around Salman Khan Jr's century. Lahore Whites' Test spinner Noman Ali claimed 5-53 — his 34th first-class five-for — to wrap up Fata's innings at 239. Lahore Whites reached 144-4 in their second innings, leading by 110, with Ali Zaryab (54) and Imran Dogar (44) among the scorers.—Agencies

Sinner-less Italy see off Spain to complete Davis Cup hat-trick

BOLOGNA: Italy captured a remarkable third consecutive Davis Cup title on Sunday with Matteo Berrettini and Flavio Cobolli winning their singles matches for a 2-0 triumph over Spain in front of delighted home fans in Bologna and completing a treble without star player Jannik Sinner.

Inspired by loud support from the home crowd, Berrettini dispatched Pablo Carreno Busta 6-3, 6-4 in the opening match before Cobolli sparked celebrations by coming back from a set down to beat Jaume Munar 1-6, 7-6 (7/5), 7-5 and seal the triumph for Filippo Volandri's team.

"It's the third consecutive one. I'm crying. I didn't cry for the first one. It's unbelievable. This is a big, big team. Some of them not even here: Sinner, [Lorenzo] Musetti, [Matteo] Arnaldi," Volandri said.

The victory over six-times winners Spain marked Italy's fourth Davis Cup crown overall, following wins in 1976, 2023 and 2024. Italy also became the first nation to win three consecutive Davis Cup titles since the Challenge Round was abolished following the 1971 event.

"This was my dream, we're a really united team, and we tried to recreate the spirit of the Italy team that won the [football] World Cup in 2006," said Cobolli. "I'm really proud of everyone and our brilliant fans are also part of this team. I've been repeating for three days but it's the best day of my life.

"I dreamed a lot for this night. I played an amazing match today. I don't know how I won. The match was tough. Jaume played so good. We cannot lose for our country. Sometimes you learn, but you never lose. If you give all you have in your heart ... I don't know what I did today. I don't know where I am. The only thing I know is that I'm world champion."

Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori haven't been employed in a doubles contest in northern Italy as the hosts won the Davis Cup without losing a match.

It's an impressive feat by Italy who competed without their two highest-ranked players in superstar Sinner and Musetti. Both players sit in the top 10 of the men's world rankings and were major absences for the tournament, especially as they chose not to take part in the title defence on home soil.

"It doesn't matter who goes out there for us, we have a deep squad and we have a lot of great lads who play great tennis," said Berrettini.

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni hailed the team's achievement, posting on X: "Determination, talent and heart: Italy triumphs again in the Davis Cup. Champions!"

Spain too were missing their top player in world number one Carlos Alcaraz, but the six-time Grand Slam winner would have played had he not suffered a hamstring injury during his ATP Finals showdown with Sinner a week ago.

Their bid for a seventh Davis Cup came up short after returning to the final for the first time since 2019.

"It was a very, very, very close tie," said Spain captain David Ferrer. "We were really close. Italy in important moments, they play really good. It's not easy for us to play in Italy against Italy."

Earlier on Sunday, the head of the International Tennis Federation insisted that top players were not snubbing the competition.

"There's this false feeling out there that top players don't represent their nation. That's not true," David Haggerty told reporters ahead of the final. "Some of those top players that played in the qualifier round or the second qualifier round didn't make it to the finals. And so we had many top players that have played."

American Taylor Fritz, Australian Alex de Minaur, Dane Holger Rune and Norwegian Casper Ruud — all in the top 20 of the men's rankings — featured in the early rounds of the competition without managing to reach the finals with their respective nations.—Agencies

ITALY'S team captain Filippo Volandri (L) and players pose in front of the David Cup trophy after their victory against Spain in the final at the Super Tennis Arena.—AFP